

ARCHITECTURE

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ARCHITECTURAL CRITICISM.

IT is very rarely that one sees so many interesting interiors brought together in a single building as in the Masonic Temple, H. P. Knowles, architect. Only in the largest club houses and hotels have so many rooms been possible, and in such cases the rooms are of various sizes and the large ones broken up by columns, so that interiors like these have been impossible. It has always seemed to me desirable to keep the treatment of the interior of the building in con-

formity with the exterior, and that the rooms, at least those opening from each other, should be done in the same style, or one so closely related to it as to insure harmony. Unhappily this is by no means the usual method of handling a building. A large hotel has always its "Louis Quinze" room; generally a café in German or Mission, and the other rooms in a confused jumble of styles without order or logic, often designed by different decorators who work without regard to the color or scale of the man doing the next room.

Very charming single rooms are often obtained by this method. To those of us who are New Yorkers the Café Elysée at the Breslin, the Tap Room at the Prince George, the Bar Room at the Knickerbocker, and the Palm Room at the Astor will at once occur as rooms beautiful in themselves but without much relation to the other portions of their respective buildings. My idea that a certain type of design should be observed throughout is very possibly a false one, but it does seem that sufficient interest could be obtained by different treatments in one style without recourse to a series of so-called "period" rooms especially when they are not all of them designed by the architect. Sherry's and the Hofbräuhaus, while at the very extreme of architectural design, are each consistent throughout and do not suffer by comparison with buildings of their respective classes where the single style of treatment does not prevail.

The case of the Masonic Temple is different. There is something about the building of a great secret order which demands the bizarre, and the treatment of the eleven lodge rooms of similar dimensions and character of furnishing in the same style would result in an appalling monotony. The architect has very wisely chosen to write in an enduring way a brief history of architecture as seen from his standpoint, but the fact that they are all considered from an individual angle, and that the same mind has dominated the styles, (instead of being dominated by them) has resulted in a series of rooms quite different in design, of every period, and yet of singular unity of character.

Because of the supposed antiquity of the Masonic order, the Egyptian style has been much employed in its buildings, and this is the one here used for the Chapter room with such excellent effect. A large part of the decoration is in color and the whole treatment shows considerable knowledge of Egyptian combined with the strength of design necessary to handle it in a manner not purely Egyptian. The manner in which the pylon is employed between the two columns with palm leaf caps, is distinctly a departure from Egyptian methods, but because of the excellent mass, this delightful detail appears in no way misplaced. It would be interesting to know if the sculpture has any symbolic meaning; and if it has, whether this meaning is expressed by ideographs really Egyptian, or by suggestions in the carving comprehensible to any one familiar with the ritual of the order.

The smaller lodge rooms shown here are those where the Grecian Doric and Ionic orders are used, the Roman Corinthian room, the Gothic, Renaissance and English Jacobean rooms and the later French Doric and Ionic, and the Colonial rooms. No label is necessary to identify them, yet each is, because of some subtle spirit, difficult to define, wholly and thoroughly modern, and not only that, but as has before been said, they are quite in character each with the other and adorn in a manner both rational and beautiful the building of which they are a part.

(Continued page 163)



ACCEPTED DESIGN, COLUMBIA THEATRE, SAN FRANCISCO.

Bliss & Faville, Architects.

(Continued from page 161)

The two Greek rooms, the Doric and Ionic ring especially true, although the styles are not easy to adjust to conditions of to-day. Their motives are few and unless handled with refined skill are apt to become ludicrous. Much alike in general treatment their differences are only those essential to the styles, yet they are by no means replicas. The manner in which the cornices are treated with the start of the coffered ceiling is especially interesting, that in the Ionic room being treated as an exterior cornice rather than as an interior. The Roman Corinthian room is also attractive but it has not quite the spirit of the other two.

The Gothic room is distinguished by its delightful ceiling treatment. Had the niches in place of the customary windows been decorated by mosaics or color the effect would be probably better, and the wainscot might have carried the Gothic idea further than was here done. At the same time these changes might have carried the room too far into the Gothic period, with a loss of that serene dignity which is its most notable characteristic.

The Renaissance room is the most elaborate of all, yet while exceedingly rich the quiet tones of the color scheme and the excellent scale of the detail assist in maintaining the integrity of the whole scheme. The lotus columns shown flanking the doorway of one of the two pictures must have a place in the ritual since they have none in design. Aside from these there is not a false note in the composition, and while the scale is somewhat smaller than that of the other rooms, owing to the lowering of the height of the order to permit the inter-sections in the ceiling, there is nothing trivial about the design.

The English Jacobean room is perhaps the weakest of them all. It could hardly be expected that the mind of an architect so thoroughly in accord with the austerity of Greek forms could sympathize with the quaint playfulness of fancy essential to complete success in English design of the Jacobean period. At that time the traditional instincts of the Gothic were making themselves felt through the half learned formulas of the Classic Revival, and the naive confusion of ideas which formed the English Renaissance, known as Jacobean, is almost impossible to an architect whose intellect has been trained in the clear and logical light of to-day. While the English Jacobean room is not so distinguished as some of the others it is still above mediocrity and forms a worthy part in the series.

The exterior of the building is designed in the Americanized French Renaissance so common in New York to-day, but it is handled with a restrained sincerity which raises it far above the ruck of present day French architecture. The same refinement visible in the exterior is evident in the French Doric and Ionic rooms. They are free from the over abundance of decoration which mars so much of our work in the French styles by confusing the basic motives, yet are free from bareness or any imputation of stinginess in their treatment.

The Colonial room, while in itself delightful, and hall-marked Colonial by the ornament, somehow fails to impress one as being truly a Colonial room. Just where this should be is hard to determine. Even with a pretty careful examination it fails to show any feature not usual in that period and in the matter of scale, the place where so much "modern Colonial" goes wrong, it is quite correct. To find where the fault lies one must seek the very point which makes the

series of rooms as a whole the strongest, that is the individual quality apparent and which has enabled the architect to bring these styles in themselves so greatly at variance into a series of harmonious compositions.

One notable point throughout all the rooms is that the furniture, electric lighting fixtures, and other minor details are all designed for their place and for no other. It is always a question as to whether or not the best work will not be spoiled by the introduction of extraneous elements by the owner. Here, fortunately, all furniture, etc., had to be bought anew, and with a display of unusual wisdom the building committee permitted this to be done under the supervision of the architect who was therefore able to get the best results.

A single criticism may perhaps not be amiss. The backs of the settees hide not only the bases of the rooms, but those of the columns, a thing which though perhaps unavoidable was nevertheless unfortunate. It seems as if by elevating the orders on plinths they might have been raised so as to give their full value, although perhaps this method was considered and rejected because of the consequent loss of scale. Another possible scheme would have been to have planned aisles terminating at the bottom of the pilasters that come down to the floor.

Of the other rooms the most interesting are the library and auditorium. In explanation of the peculiar design of the library, it may be said that it is not intended for use as a reading room but rather for the preservation of the records, etc. The ceiling treatment seems rather overwhelming. The auditorium is most attractive. The method of support of the balcony being especially good, since the material and strength of the columns is self-evident without their being so large as to interfere with the vision of those seated behind.

A more interesting collection of interiors I have never seen presented in one building, and while it may be urged that the chance was extraordinary it is not every architect who would have grasped his opportunities so completely.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ARCHITECTURE.

THE subject of architecture is, perhaps, of more vital importance than many people are aware, and we doubt whether it is possible for the ordinary man living amid his present surroundings to realize the part architecture had played in the lives of men in the past. Undoubtedly, we live in an age in which there was a sad want of interest in things artistic, and in our opinion indifference has had a disastrous effect on our national character. At least half of our present social and economic troubles would never have arisen had we been a nation who really loved the beautiful. If we possessed that love there would not be the terrible slums in our great cities, the degraded lives of many of our workers, or the aimless lives of many wealthy people. Architecture affords the best means of studying the character of a people, and a better medium could not be found when making comparisons between nations. Why should we not have in all quarters of our great cities things of beauty, so that every street, every corner, every square, and every house might be delightful to behold? After going round some districts it was not surprising to find that the people living in such surroundings had no interest in art. For these reasons they should take a real interest in architecture for its own sake, and for the sake of the advantages to which a knowledge of it might be applied.



BOOK REVIEWS.

MODERN HOMES. T. Raffles Davison. London, 1909. The Macmillan Company, New York. Cloth. \$5.25 net.

The English practitioner and writer maintains a foremost position on the subject of homes and from him we have acquired much that is good in American work of domestic character.

Mr. Davison furnishes us with a delightful selection of examples of dwelling houses, described and illustrated, with a foreword by Sir Aston Webb. The book is well presented.

THE ARCHITECTS' DIRECTORY AND SPECIFICATION INDEX. William T. Comstock, New York, 1909. Cloth. \$3.00 net.

The ninth edition of a reliable and popular reference book which appears in this issue, with many changes and new features.

The additions include a special list of architects to Boards of Education and a list of Architectural Societies throughout the world.

ONE HUNDRED COUNTRY HOUSES. By Aymar Embury II, Architect. 1909. Century Company, Publishers. \$3.00.

This recent addition to the long list of books on country houses differs considerably from the usual type. It is not a compilation from the back numbers of any magazine, but an entirely new collection of subjects. Many of them have of course been illustrated before, but any book of country houses which endeavors to show the best work that has been done in the country necessarily must include considerable old matter.

Here, for the first time, country houses have been divided into styles so that an architect searching for something to help him may readily find what he is looking for.

The book's greatest strength lies in the fact that the material is not from any particular portion of the United States, but has been gathered from the entire country. Considerable work by California and Chicago architects is shown, as well as the work of the best of the Eastern men. The first introductory chapter on "The New American Architecture" may perhaps serve to clarify ideas on our modern development. It attempts to show that a new architecture is rapidly being developed here which is in itself a style as complete and distinct from others as the modern German. Also that this style is not local to New York or Philadelphia, but extends over the whole country and that such a style is rationally founded upon the European work. Also that any expectation of America producing an architecture without precedent is contrary to the laws which govern the development of all art.

The running criticism of every house, while it may not be useful to the architects of the larger cities will probably be worth the attention of those men who do not have the opportunity every day to exchange ideas with the well informed of their colleagues.

STRUCTURAL DETAILS. Henry S. Jacoby. 1909. John Wiley & Sons, New York. Cloth. \$2.25 net.

The title of this volume corresponds to a course of instruction conducted by the author in the College of Civil Engineering in Cornell University during the past nineteen years.

It comprises 368 pages, profusely illustrated, with figures in the text, six folding plates and 34 full-page plates.

POWER, HEATING AND VENTILATION. Charles L. Hubbard, B.S., M.E. 1908. The Technical Press, Brattleboro, Vt. Cloth. \$5.00.

Mr. Hubbard is a consulting engineer whose ability and experience fit him for the work of preparing a most comprehensive treatise for engineers, architects and students. His book is published in one volume and includes much practical data taken from notebooks on various problems which actually had to be worked out.

LIGHT AND HEAVY TIMBER FRAMING. Fred T. Hodgson, F.A.I.C. 1909. Frederick J. Drake & Co., Chicago. Cloth.

Being a copious treatise on the modern practical methods

of executing all kinds of timber framing, from the simple scantling shed or lean-to, to the heavy complicated timber bridges, centers, needling and shoring, roofing and railway work, tank frames and taper structures.

Published with over four hundred and fifty illustrations and diagrams.

THE DECORATION AND FURNITURE OF ENGLISH MANSIONS DURING THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES. Francis Lenygon. 1909. Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Cloth. \$10.00.

The study of the arts of the Renaissance in England has been facilitated and benefited by the results of recent research and the publication of valuable data and examples. This book seeks to be of special service since it aims at the treatment of walls, ceilings, floors and furniture—in short, the development of the whole scheme of interior decoration of the period. It is a handsome book, well printed, substantially bound in cloth and elaborately illustrated.

FRENCH CATHEDRALS. Elizabeth Robins Pennell. 1909. The Century Co., New York. Cloth.

This is a travel story with such a wonderful amount of study and information that it might also be classed as a text book. The cathedrals of France form a foundation for much that has been accomplished in really good American ecclesiastical work and architects in this country are aware of its value.

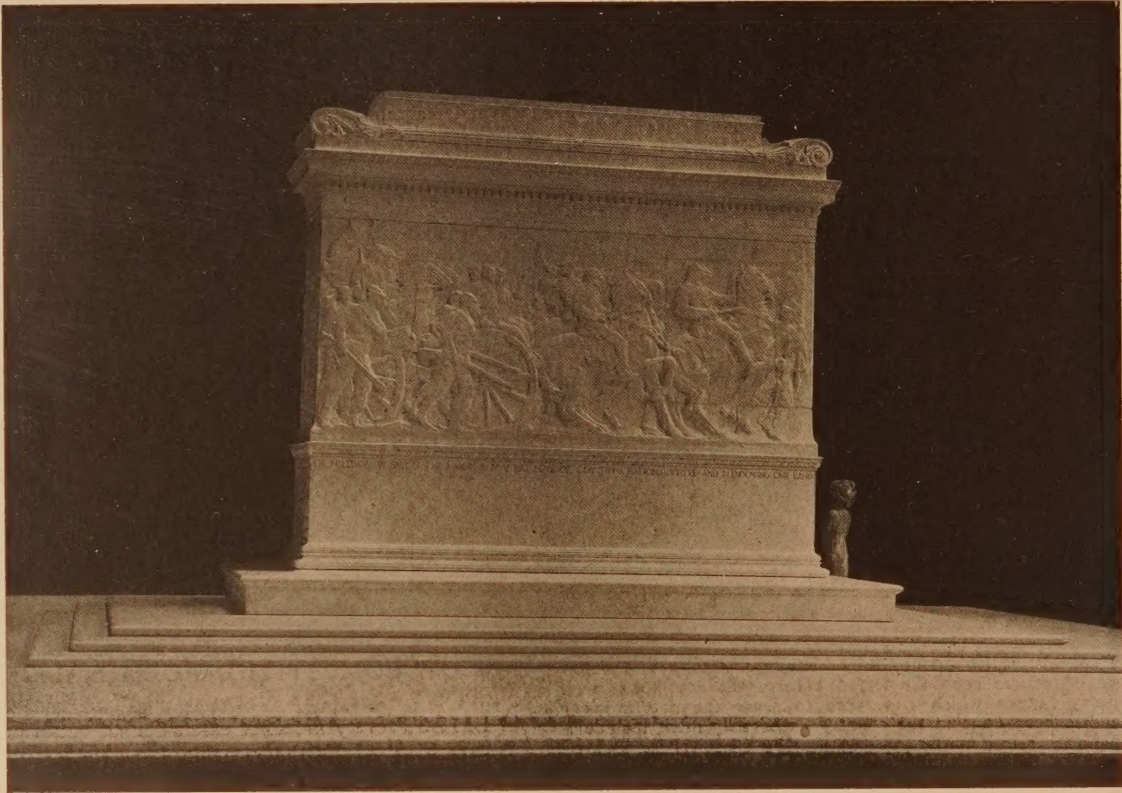
The book is attractive in blue cloth binding and illustrated with beautiful tint plates.

HOW COMPETITIONS DEMORALIZE.

S. C. NEWMAN.

ALMOST every architect enters for an occasional competition. It is the recognized method of filling up spare time and of keeping a staff together when there is nothing else to do. It is also the recognized way by which he who is engaged ordinarily in quite a commonplace practice keeps himself in touch with better things. Besides these two classes of competitors, and saying nothing of the young man who enters for the sake of the experience he may gain thereby, there yet remains a body of men who do nothing else but compete, trusting entirely to their successes—which may average, with the exceptional man, perhaps one in every twenty efforts—for their livelihood. Necessarily, those who adopt this method of securing work, to the exclusion of all others, are clever architects, good planners, and excellent designers, possessing the knack of showing all the good points of their schemes with comparatively little effort, and often gifted with the power of adapting themselves to the known idiosyncrasies of any particular judge. These men really set the standard of competition work. They are well known to one another and to the judges, as well as to the general rank and file of the profession, and it is not too much to say that any judge of experience could pick out the work of this, that, or the other of these architects, whatever precautions may be taken to prevent the disclosure of identity. They form a clique; but it is a clique of merit, entry into which is to be obtained by any capable man who has it in him to produce work of equal calibre with theirs. Almost all the open competitions in the country are carried off by one or other member of this small circle. Amongst them it is little more than a gamble as to who shall win—if that can properly be called a gamble which is in its very essence a game of skill. If the problem set is an easy one on a simple site, many men of less note are encouraged to enter, and may stand an equal chance; but large and difficult problems can only be dealt with properly, it seems, by those who have had experience in competition work on a large scale.

(Continued page 167)



ACCEPTED DESIGN, SOLDIERS AND SAILORS MEMORIAL, ALBANY, N. Y.

Lord & Hewlett, Architects.

(Continued from page 165).

So far the state of affairs is well understood and is perfectly legitimate—except in this respect, that the public are led to imagine that architects must be excessively overpaid in the ordinary way if they are willing to spend an immense amount upon drawings, in competitions with others, in order to obtain what, after all, is only the ordinary commission if they succeed in securing the work. At one time the conduct of competitions was a constant source of trouble, particularly in the days before the appointment of a professional judge was a recognized necessity. With his advent one source of trouble has disappeared; but several others remain, the most prominent amongst these being a feeling, justified by many an award, that strict compliance with the conditions is not merely a non-essential, but is likely to be an absolute bar to success. There is one well-known competing firm which invariably puts aside the question of cost entirely and submits an ideal scheme. In several cases the result has justified their action. They have been able to show that a much better building could be produced if only the cost-limit were waived, and they have put their arguments so forcibly as to induce the judge to recommend the adoption of their scheme. As a matter of strict honesty, this cannot be considered to be right; but the judge's position has in every case been probably a difficult one: he has felt it his duty to advise the promoters that they would secure much better value for their money by spending a certain amount in excess than by adopting the plans of some other competitor who had literally complied with the conditions. The result has been good for the promoters and for architecture, but bad for the morality of architects.

There is always a temptation, when a cost-limit is fixed, to take the advice of some near relative of Ananias when compiling the approximate estimate, and this temptation becomes almost irresistible when it is known that time and again successful designs have in execution largely exceeded the stipulated cost. The matter is not greatly altered when a competitor honestly states that his building will cost more than the sum named, while pointing out the additional advantages secured by the extra expenditure, thereby securing an award in his favor, while as a matter of fact his design should have been disqualified. Most commonly, however, competitors will prepare elevations out of all proportion to the money which there is to spend, trusting thereby to win the competition, and having somewhere at the back of their brain a scheme for reducing the cost, in the event of success, by cutting away this feature or that—substituting, perhaps, eaves for a stone parapet, and brickwork for stone facing down side roads and flank walls, in order to bring down the estimate eventually, caring little that the building erected will then bear but a faint resemblance to that the design for which the promoters of the competition were so proud to approve on the advice of their skilled judge.

Besides these, there are other well-known tricks—for they can be called nothing else—which are practiced by the less scrupulous competition architects. Perspectives are produced in which no notice is taken of intervening buildings, or they are "fudged," altering the proportions and improving the design, bringing out the more beautiful features, and hiding or omitting those which would be less satisfactory. Occasionally, careful examination will disclose the fact that plans do not agree with sections, nor sections with elevations. "The drawings have been prepared in a hurry, without thinking out all details." This is a very convenient excuse for one

who has deliberately set side the practical requirements of his plan when he has been designing his elevation; but as often as not it is untrue. The want of correspondence between drawing and drawing has been well-known to the author; but he has allowed his desire to secure the work to overmaster his regard for rectitude. As for conditions laying down precise scales for certain drawings, or stipulating that there shall be no shading and no washes upon the elevations, these are all made to be disregarded more or less, and it is even sometimes extremely difficult to say whether conditions of this sort have been contravened or not. When, for instance, a competitor outlines his prominent features with a broad ink-line, while using a fine line for the minor features, it can hardly be said that he has shaded his drawing, though the effect of shading is produced. When a color wash is prohibited, it is difficult to say whether a flat wash of light Indian ink is permissible. In a recent case it was stipulated that there should be no color washes except on the floors, and that the elevations should be in black ink only: a wash of diluted black ink was introduced—by one competitor only—over the roofs, in the windows, and to mark the recessing under a portico, two different shades being used? Was this honest or was it not? The matter must be left to the consciences of the competitor who thereby emphasized his design and the judge who accepted it. On the same occasion another competitor spent two hundred dollars in having wash perspectives made in light ink, and he was disqualified—most justly.

The net results of all these considerations is that competitors are bound to see that strict honesty does not pay, while at the same time they are always in doubt as to how far they may go in their dishonesty with impunity. Nothing could be more demoralizing than this. By means of strenuous effort the nomination of a professional judge has been secured in almost every important competition; but the judge selected is almost invariably an old competitor himself, tainted by many years of contact with that which is scarcely right, and, without knowing it, he has lost an appreciation of the difference between what is strictly honest and what is not. Even when the most flagrant injustice has been done, the judge has probably thought that he has acted rightly. We are not, of course, speaking of cases where the only fault to find has been lack of judgment, or of those others in which a judge has apparently made a bad award in order to create trouble and eventually secure the work himself, but of the many in which the successful competitor has in some way or other travestied the conditions—to use the mildest word possible to explain our meaning. We have sought a cure from the flagrant dishonesty of the olden times, when wirepulling was the rule, and the local committee gave the work to him who had most friends; and the remedy is as bad as the disease, for the professional judge, even with the best intentions in the world, is apt to be uneven-handed in his justice.

There is a general, but erroneous, idea that the best architects are necessarily the best judge, and that the President of the Institute must, from his small acquaintance, be able to select the right man for adjudicating every competition. As a matter of fact, he distributes his patronage, during his term of office, as fairly as he can amongst the best-known competition-winners and the most prominent men in the Institute, regardless of their fitness to act the part of judges in the ordinary legal and impartial sense. What is

(Continued page 173)



COUNTRY HOUSE, W. B. TUBBY, GREENWICH, CONN.

Kinnear Pressed Radiators.

Yale & Towne Hardware.

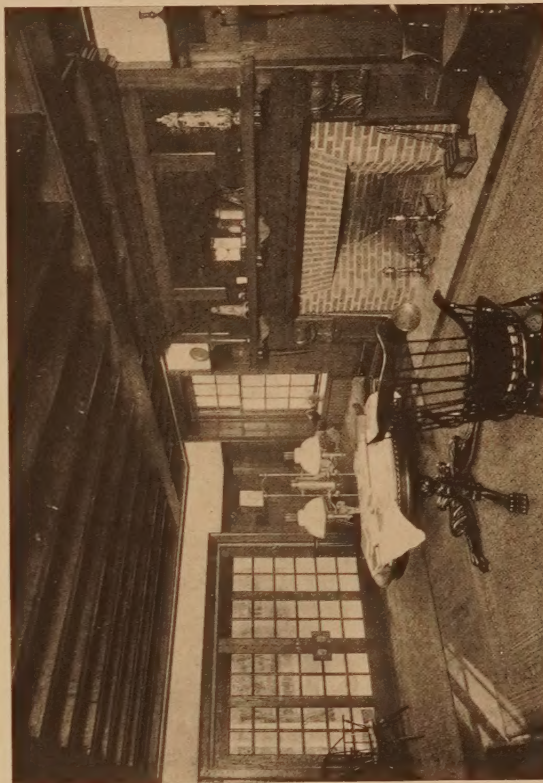
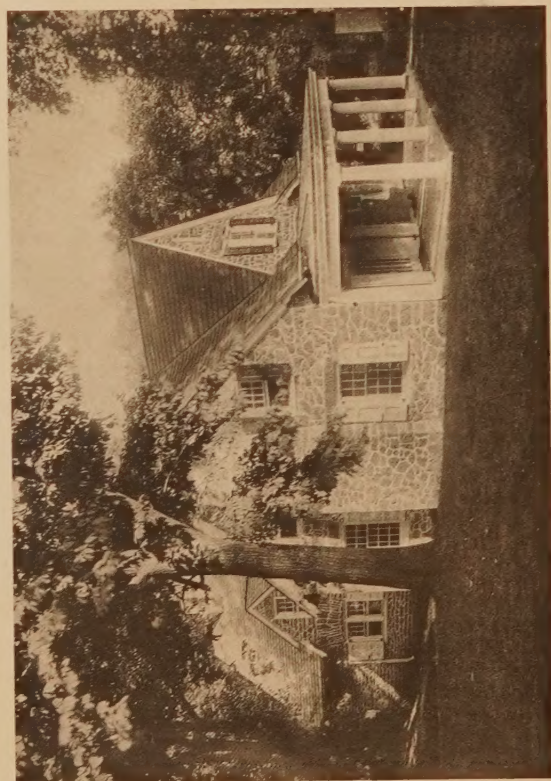
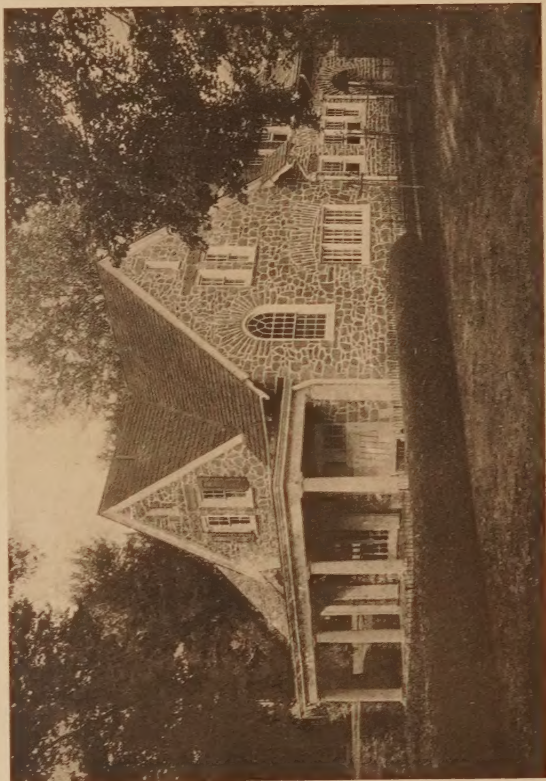
W. B. Tubby, Architect.



COUNTRY HOUSE, MILTON SEE, CORCORAN MANOR, MT. VERNON, N. Y.

(Plans page 175).

Milton See & Son, Architects.



ALTERATION OF STABLE TO A RESIDENCE, ALFRED MELLOR, GERMANTOWN, PA.

(Plans page 173).

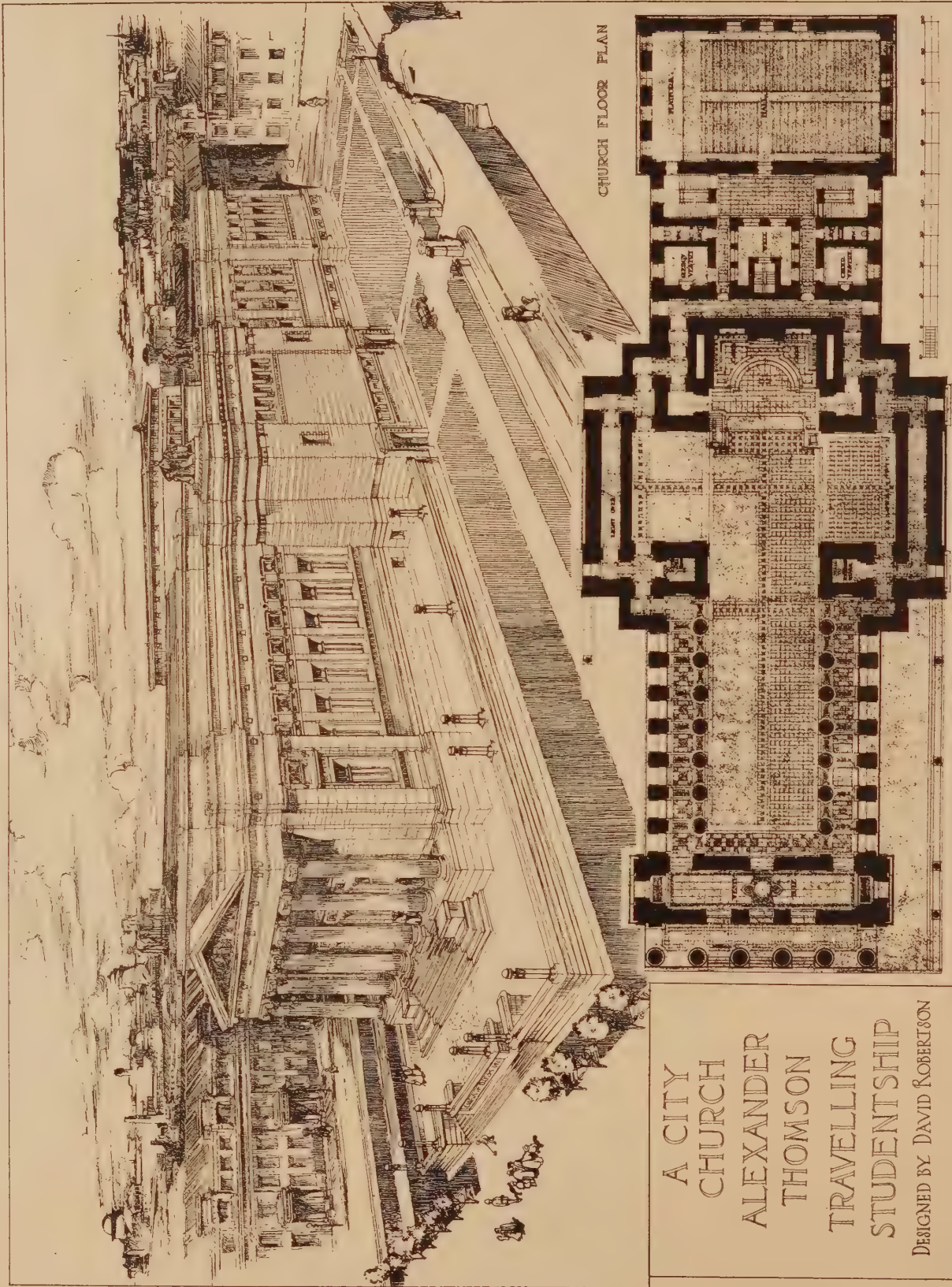
Mellor & Meigs, Architects.



RESIDENCE, EDWARD DALE TOLAND, WYNNEWOOD, PA.

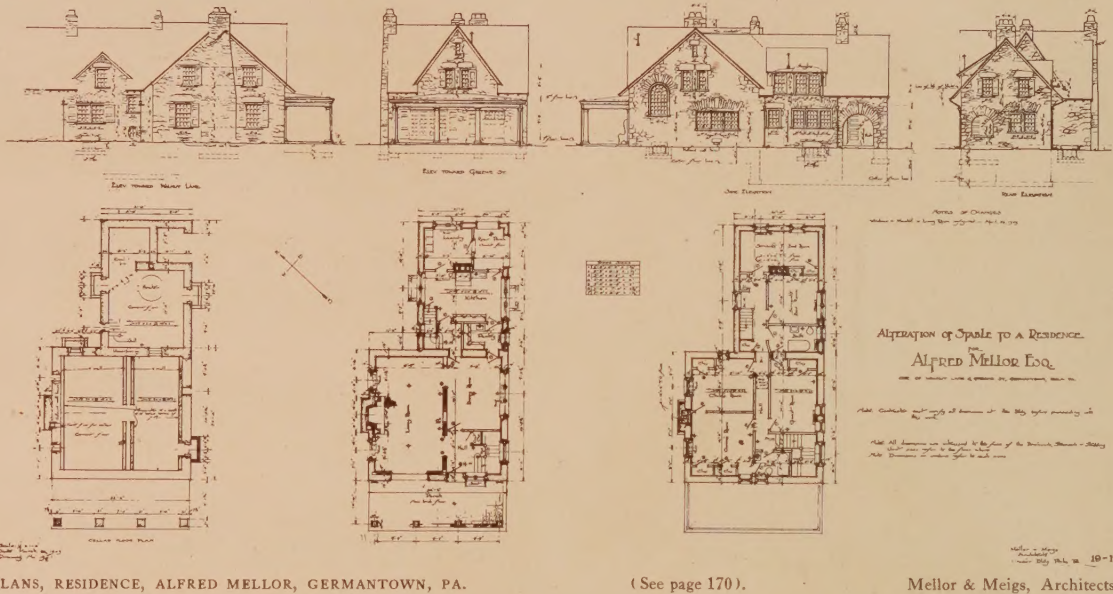
(Plans page 173).

Mellor & Meigs, Architects.



A CITY
CHURCH
ALEXANDER
THOMSON
TRAVELLING
STUDENTSHIP

DESIGNED BY DAVID ROBERTSON



PLANS, RESIDENCE, ALFRED MELLOR, GERMANTOWN, PA.

(See page 170).

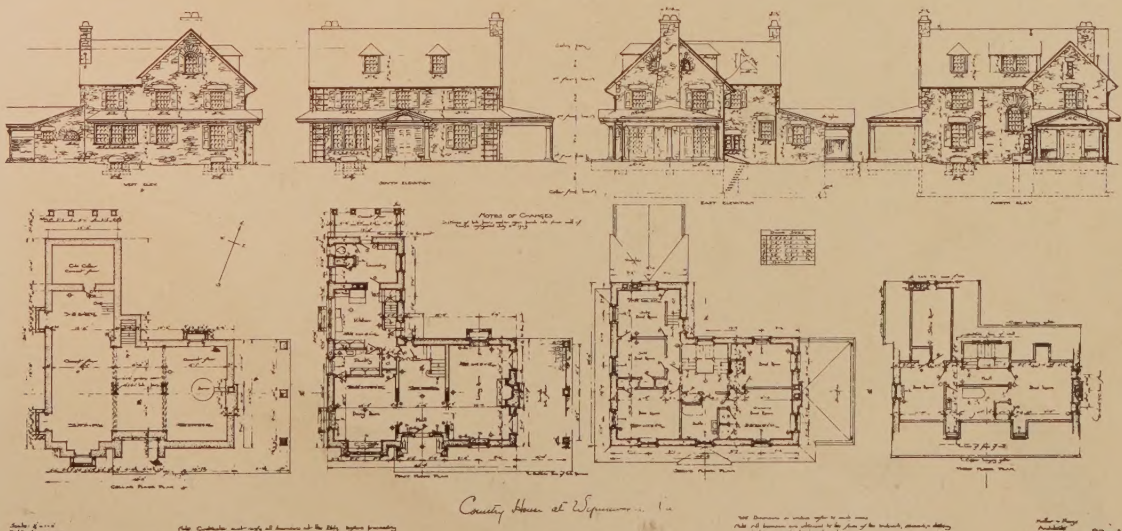
Mellor & Meigs, Architects.

(Continued from page 167)

wanted now is to do away entirely with this patronage system of appointment, and to replace it by the life appointment of retired architects of known integrity, preferably acting on all large works as a jury of three, but occasionally working single-handed, always adopting one uniform system, and letting it be known that the slightest infringement of definite conditions will result in disqualification. Conditions are often too strict; but here again the judge is as much at fault as anyone else, for it is he who draws up the conditions, or, at any rate, approves of them. He ought to allow plenty of laxity where laxity is possible. At the same time, once having fixed limits in any respects, they should be most absolutely enforced. Competitors would soon come to know what they had to expect, and there would be very few attempts indeed to win by trickery of draughtsmanship, by

mis-statement of cost, or by improper finish of drawings if once it were understood that these things would inevitably meet their punishment. It is the fact that, while some judges are strict, other are lax, and that few know whether strictness or laxity is to be expected in any particular case, which leads to the present deplorable state of affairs. The canker of dishonesty has entered into competition work, and needs to be dealt with as drastically as dry-rot in a building.

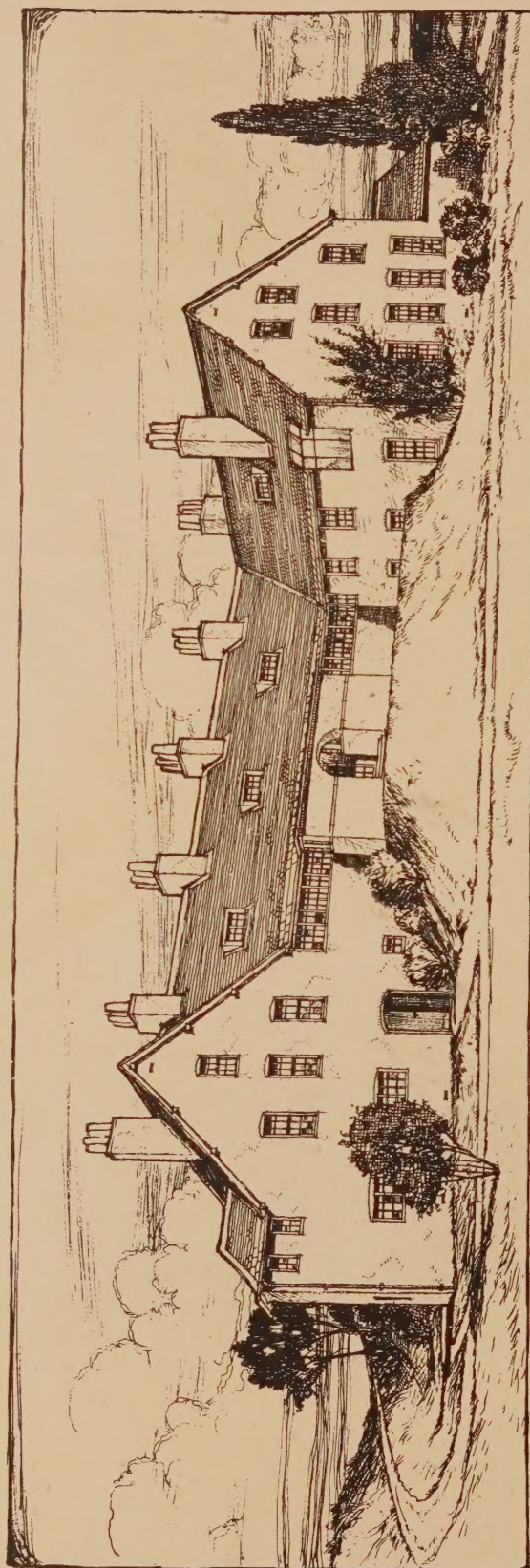
THE Executive Board announces that the Annual Convention of the Architectural League of America will be held at the Willard Hotel, Washington, D. C., December 11, 13 and 14, 1909. Further information can be obtained from the President, 1103 Union Trust Building, Detroit, Mich., or from the office of the Permanent Secretary, 729 15th Street, Washington, D. C.



PLANS, RESIDENCE, EDWARD DALE TOLAND, WYNNEWOOD, PA.

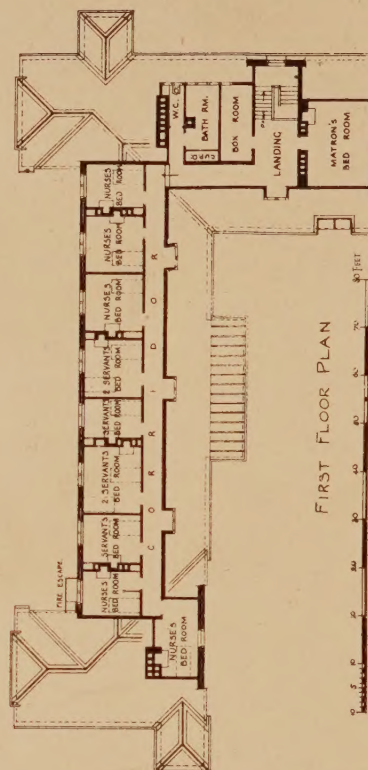
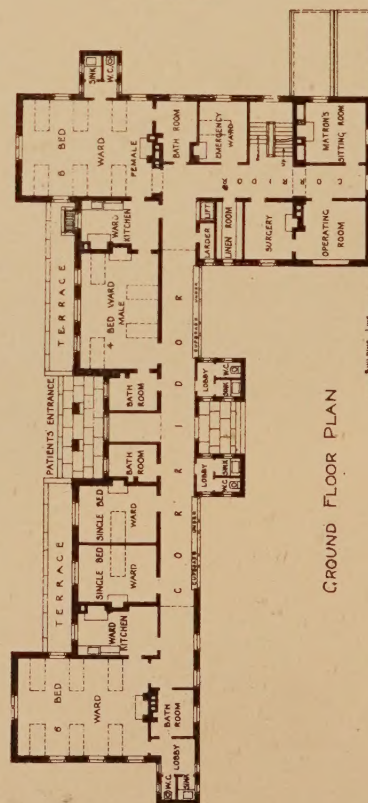
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Mellor & Meigs, Architects.



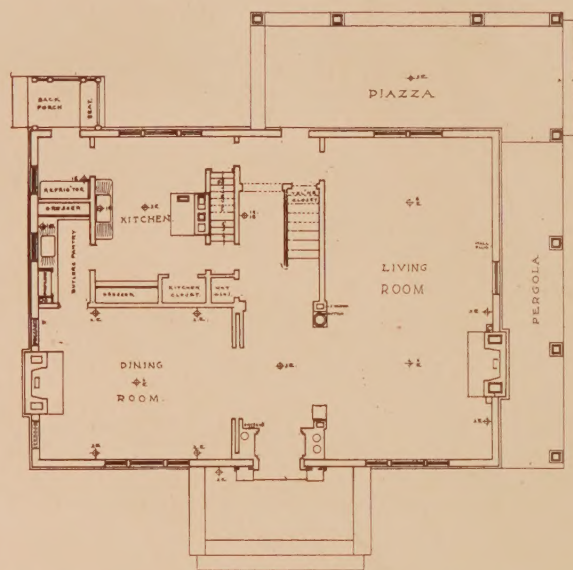
HOMEOPATHIC COTTAGE HOSPITAL. SOUTHPORT.

H. P. ADAMS & CHARLES HOLDEN ARCHT. SOUTHPORT, ENGLAND.

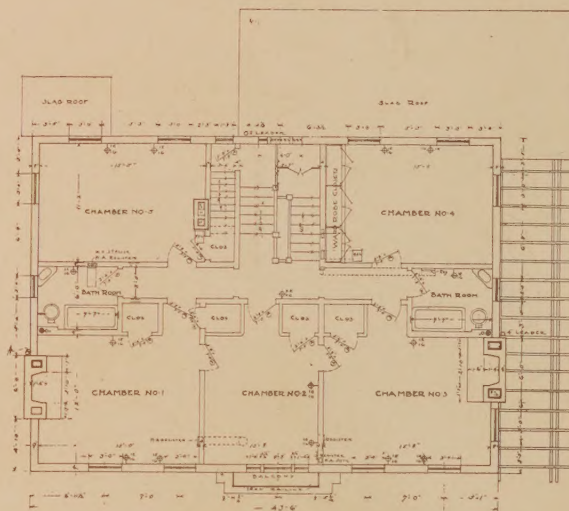


HOMEOPATHIC COTTAGE HOSPITAL, SOUTHPORT (ENGLAND).

H. P. Adams and Charles Holden, Architects.



PLANS, COUNTRY HOUSE, MILTON SEE, CORCORAN MANOR, MT. VERNON, N. Y.



(See page 169).

Milton See & Son, Architects.

HOUSE AT CORCORAN MANOR, MT. VERNON.

THE views of this house illustrate an attempt to give some interest to a suburban house absolutely a simple "box" in plan. This form was adopted because of its alleged economy. The site of the house before building began was a veritable tanglewood, filled with trees and wild shrubbery, and mostly all below the grade of the street. There were some really fine trees that were worth the saving—oak, hickory and maple—and these were (dry) walled up to the new grade. Landscape accessories are planned to be carried out in the spring. These provide an open-air "room" in the rear surrounded with "privet" hedges, with masses of rhododendrons and some silver birches, which we think will prove effective against the dark foliage of green. A bed of flowering perennials is also contemplated to get a succession of cut flowers the season through.

The plan is so simple that it explains itself. The piazza was placed in the rear of the house because of some really fine views in that direction and for greater privacy. Further, it is accessible to kitchen so that the family meals may be served there as conveniently as in the dining room.

We are not unmindful of the faults in design perpetrated in this essay. The sills of the windows, in our estimation, are just a little robust to suit the eye critical, and we feel the absence of a console at the end of the pergola on the front. Besides the five rooms and two bath rooms on the second floor, there are four rooms and servants' bath room in the attic. The laundry and heating apparatus is located in the cellar.

The house is constructed of hollow, vitrified, salt-glazed terra-cotta telephone conduits, stuccoed on the outside; the body of the wall in grey, with trimmings of white Portland cement.

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